

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of the claims will replace all prior versions and listing of the claims in this application.

Listing of the Claims:

1. (Currently amended) ~~Vacuum~~ A vacuum cleaner apparatus including a vacuum cleaner (1) with a suction inlet (3), a substantially rigid tubular cleaning wand (21) and a flexible hose (30) that can be extended and retracted in length, the hose (30) being connected at one end (32) with the suction inlet (3), and the other end (31) of the hose (30) being secured with the wand (21) and extending substantially to the forward end (22) of the wand when stowed, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein a flexible outer member (40) extends externally along a part of the length of the hose and is adapted to be secured between the rear end (27) of the wand (21) and the vacuum cleaner (1) so as to retain the hose (30) in a retracted state within the wand (21) and the outer member (40).

2. (Currently amended) ~~Vacuum~~ A vacuum cleaner apparatus according to Claim 1, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the hose (30) is retractable by suction pressure, and that the wand (21) includes an occluder (26) for occluding air flow into the hose.

3. (Currently amended) ~~Vacuum~~ A vacuum cleaner apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein ~~or 2, characterised in that~~ the flexible outer member is a sleeve (40).

4. (Currently amended) ~~Vacuum~~ A vacuum cleaner apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein any one of the preceding claims, characterised in that the forward end of the hose (30) is secured adjacent to the forward end (22) of the wand (21).

5. (Currently amended) ~~Vacuum~~ A vacuum cleaner apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein any one of the preceding claims, characterised in that the wand (21) is telescopic, having at least two sections (23 and 24) slidable one within the other.

6. (Currently amended) ~~Vacuum~~ A vacuum cleaner apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein any one of the preceding claims, characterised in that the outer flexible member (40) is secured at one end with the vacuum cleaner (1) and has a coupling (41) at ~~its other~~ another end (42) that can be coupled with the rear end (27) of the wand (21).

7. (Currently amended) A hose assembly (2) ~~of comprising~~ comprising a hose (30), wand (21) and outer flexible member (40) for use in a vacuum cleaner apparatus according to Claim 1 any one of the preceding claims.

8. (Currently Amended) A method of operating vacuum cleaner apparatus, the method comprising: including the steps of

applying suction to one end (32) of a flexible hose (30);

using a cleaning head (20) attached to a substantially rigid wand (21) at ~~the opposite~~ another end (31) of the hose opposite the one end to clean[.,,];

subsequently retracting a forward part of the length of the hose (30) relative to the wand (21) and a rear part of the length of the hose relative to a flexible outer member (40); and

securing the flexible outer member (40) between the rear end (27) of the wand (21) and the vacuum cleaner (1) so that the hose (30) is retained in a retracted length.

9. (Currently amended) A method according to Claim 8, ~~characterised in that the method includes the step of~~ comprising occluding passage of air into the forward end (31) of the hose (30) while the vacuum cleaner (1) is operating so that suction is created within the hose (30) sufficient to retract the hose in length.

10. (New) A vacuum cleaner apparatus according to Claim 2, wherein the flexible outer member is a sleeve.

11. (New) A vacuum cleaner apparatus according to Claim 2, wherein the forward end of the hose is secured adjacent to the forward end of the wand.

12. (New) A vacuum cleaner apparatus according to Claim 3, wherein the forward end of the hose is secured adjacent to the forward end of the wand.

13. (New) A vacuum cleaner apparatus according to Claim 2, wherein the wand is telescopic, having at least two sections slidable one within the other.

14. (New) A vacuum cleaner apparatus according to Claim 3, wherein the wand is telescopic, having at least two sections slidable one within the other.

15. (New) A vacuum cleaner apparatus according to Claim 4, wherein the wand is telescopic, having at least two sections slidable one within the other.

16. (New) A vacuum cleaner apparatus according to Claim 2, wherein the outer flexible member is secured at one end with the vacuum cleaner and has a coupling at another end that can be coupled with the rear end of the wand.

17. (New) A vacuum cleaner apparatus according to Claim 3, wherein the outer flexible member is secured at one end with the vacuum cleaner and has a coupling at another end that can be coupled with the rear end of the wand.

18. (New) A vacuum cleaner apparatus according to Claim 4, wherein the outer flexible member is secured at one end with the vacuum cleaner and has a coupling at another end that can be coupled with the rear end of the wand.

19. (New) A vacuum cleaner apparatus according to Claim 5, wherein the outer flexible member is secured at one end with the vacuum cleaner and has a coupling at another end that can be coupled with the rear end of the wand.

20. (New) A hose assembly comprising a hose, wand and outer flexible member for use in a vacuum cleaner apparatus according to Claim 2.